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Montana moves forward with hydrogen future

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NEWS RELEASE

July 2, 2003

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MONTANA MOVES FORWARD WITH HYDROGEN FUTURE

MISSOULA-

A key part of R. Paul Williamson's plan to establish Montana as leader of a hydrogen energy revolution was set into motion with the state Legislature's recent approval of House Joint Resolution No. 26.

HJ 26, a joint resolution of the Montana Senate and House of Representatives, supports creating a hydrogen-based economy in the state. The resolution passed in April.

Williamson, dean of The University of Montana College of Technology, crafted an energy plan that would make hydrogen the state's key economic development focus. The plan was adopted into the wording of HJ 26, which resolves to support its implementation.

HJ 26 was initiated by House Majority Whip Cindy Younkin, R-Bozeman, with the support of Senate Majority Leader Fred Thomas, R-Stevensville, and 15 additional legislators.

Its text reads in part: "Whereas, the stability of the United States' economy and security is threatened by its dependence on foreign energy imports; and ... Montana is in need of a statewide economic driver to spur its economy ... therefore, be it resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the state of Montana: That the Montana Legislature support the implementation of a Montana hydrogen energy plan"

The resolution then outlines actions including educating the public about the benefits of

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a hydrogen economy, establishing a Montana Hydrogen Futures Project initiative, encouraging development of a Montana Hydrogen Futures Park campus at UM, and creating an educational system to prepare professionals for working with hydrogen technology.

The complete text is online at data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/2003/billhtml/HJ0026.htm.

Williamson currently is working to establish an Office of Hydrogen Development in Missoula. The office, a cooperative effort of Montana Technology Enterprise Center and the UM College of Technology, will serve as an information clearinghouse and resource for hydrogen-related businesses.

The Office of Hydrogen Development will be located in MonTEC, a business incubator formed by a partnership between UM and the Missoula Area Economic Development Corp.

“The office will facilitate the businesses that are wanting to come to Montana,” Williamson said. “We’ll turn them over to the right people, set up meetings We’ll serve as a gateway for hydrogen development.”

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